

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 166795 TOSEC 070020

EXDIS

FOLLOWING REPEAT NEW DELHI 9254 SENT SECSTATE DATED JULY 10.

QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 9254

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, US

SUBJECT: ANTI-US ALLEGATIONS IN INDIA AND POSSIBLE CALL ON MRS.
GANDHI

REF: A) STATE 161658 B) STATE 161677 C) SECTO 06005

1. I AM SENDING A LETTER TO CHAVAN ON THE PRESS AS PROPOSED
IN NEW DELHI'S 9106, WITH CHANGES SUGGESTED IN REF C.

2. I WILL ALSO REQUEST AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE FOREIGN SECRETARY
AS SOON AS HE RETURNS TO TOWN EARLY NEXT WEEK TO MAKE THE SAME
POINTS ORALLY ASH
ELL AS THOSE SUGGESTED IN REF B. I MAY SEE
CHAVAN AT ONE OR ANOTHER FUNCTION IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS, AND IF
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I DO I WILL INFORMALLY TALK TO HIM ON THIS ISSUE AS WELL, BUT
I DO NOT WANT TO MAKE MY ONLY CALLS ON CHAVAN ONES OF COMPLAINT
ABOUT THE PRESS AND SPEECHES.

3. I AM NOT SURE THAT I WANT TO PROTEST THE , BRIEF, AND WELL-POLICED DEMONSTRATION BEFORE USIS ON JULY 9 AT THIS POINT. IT IS TRUE THAT UNDER THE EMERGENCY, BY GRANTING PERMISSION FOR SUCH DEMONSTRATIONS WE CAN INFER THAT THE GOI APPROVES OF THE PURPOSES OF THE DEMONSTRATORS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE HAVE NEVER PROTESTED SIMILAR DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE PAST. WE OURSELVES HAVE ALWAYS STRONGLY ARGUED FOR THE RIGHT OF PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY AND WHILE THE INDIANS ARE GRANTING THAT RIGHT IN A PRETTY LIMITED WAY AT THIS TIME, IT IS CONSISTENT WITH OUR PREFERENCE FOR DEMOCRACY TO COMPLAIN ABOUT SUCH PEACEFUL ASSEMBLY, AS LONG AS OUR LEGITIMATE RIGHTS AND PROTECTION ARE BEING ASSURED? I WOULD MUCH RATHER CONCENTRATE ON STATEMENTS AND COMMENTS BY SENIOR OFFICIALS AND OBJECTIONABLE MATERIAL IN THE CENSORED PRESS WHERE IT SEEMS TO ME OUR POSITION IS MUCH STRONGER. UNQUOTE

4. IT IS CLAR TO ME THAT THE PRIME MINISTER IS PERFECTLY AWARE OF WHAT IS GOING ON. YESTERDAY SHE APPEARED AT A JOINT COMMUNIST PARTY-CONGRESS PARTY SPONSORED MEETING IN HONOR OF MOZAMBIQUE AT WHICH THE COMMUNIST SPEAKER BLASTED CIA EFFORTS TO "DESTABILIZE" INDIA, AND AGAIN HERSELF SPOKE OF INDIA'S BEING "ACCUSED BY COUNTRIES, WHICH HAVE SUPPORTED TOTALITARIAN REGIMES, FOR ABANDONING DEMOCRACY." SHE OBVIOUSLY HAS HER OWN REASONS FOR DOING THIS, BUT IF WE ARE GOING TO GET OUR POINT ACROSS TO MRS. GANDHI, I THINK IT WILL BE USEFUL FOR ME TO DO THIS DIRECTLY WITH HER, PARTICULARLY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE POINTS MADE IN SECTO 06005.

5. SUCH A CALL ON THE PM WOULD HAVE A NUMBER OF ADVANTAGES AND SOME DISADVANTAGES. IN PARTICULAR, I RECOGNIZE THAT YOU MAY NOT WISH SUCH A CALL AT THIS TIME FOR US DOMESTIC POLITICAL REASONS. BUT I HAVE NOT SEEN MRS. GANDHI SINCE BILL SIMONS WAS HERE IN MID-APRIL. SINCE THEN I'VE BEEN BACK IN THE US AND THERE WOULD BE SOME GENERAL LOGIC IN MY REQUESTING A MEETING WITH HER. IF YOU AGREE, I WOULD PROPOSE TO DO SO NEXT WEEK, IN ORDER TO PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN THE EVENTS OF THIS WEEK AND A MEETING, ASSUMING THERE ARE NO FURTHER DEMONSTRATIONS HERE.

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6. IN SEEING THE PM, I WOULD (A) REITERATE THE CIRCUMSPECTION OF THE USG IN COMMENTING ON THE INDIAN POLITICAL SITUATION; (B) NOTE DIRECTLY MRS. GANDHI'S POSITIVE REMARKS LAST WEEK ON INDO-US RELATIONS AND TO STATE THAT WE LOOKED FORWARD TO FONMIN-SECRETARY MEETING IN NEXT TWO MONTHS; (C) STATE OUR HOPES OF BEING ABLE TO CONTINUE TO MOVE AHEAD IN DEVELOPING INDO-US BILATERAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS; (D) IN THIS GENERAL POSITIVE ATMOSPHERIC CONTEXT, EMPHASIZE THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF STATEMENTS, SPEECHES, AND ARTICLES WHICH HAVE APPEARED IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS INCLUDING SEVERAL OF HER OWN, AND EMPHASIZE THAT IF THESE CONTINUE, THE PUBLIC AND POLITICAL REACTION IN THE US CANNOT BUT HAVE A DAMAGING EFFECT ON THE POSITIVE OBJECTIVES WE SEEK.

7. I RECOGNIZE THAT SUCH A MEETING COULD BE MISINTERPRETED IN THE US. BUT MRS. GANDHI IS NOW MORE THAN EVER THE PERSON WHO IS IMPORTANT HERE. EVERYONE HERE KNOWS IT AND MY CALLING ON HER SIMPLY UNDERSCORES THAT WE KNOW IT TOO. IF WE HAVE AN IMPORTANT POINT TO MAKE, SHE IS THE PERSON TO WHOM IT MUST BE MADE. IF THE QUESTION ARISES AS TO WHETHER WE ARE EXPRESSING OUR APPROVAL OF HER SUBORDINATION OF DEMOCRACY BY SUCH A CALL, ALL WE CAN SAY--AND I THINK IT IS NOTHING BUT THE TRUTH--IS THAT MRS. GANDHI IS THE LEADER OF INDIA AND THE AUTHORITY WITH WHICH THE US DEALS IN RELATIONS WITH THIS COUNTRY.

8. MY VISIT WITH MRS. GANDHI WOULD BE POLITICALLY ADVANTAGEOUS TO HER, AND I THINK SHE WOULD WELCOME THE VISIT EVEN IF SOME OF THE SPECIFIC THINGS I SAY ARE NOT SO PALATABLE. THE CALL WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY RECEIVE PUBLICITY. WE WOULD SUGGEST THE PRESS BE TOLD ONLY THAT THE MEETING WAS TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF MUTUAL INDO-US CONCERN.

9. IF A DECISION HAS BEEN MADE, I THINK THAT THIS MAY ALSO BE THE OCCASION ON WHICH TO INFORM MRS. GANDHI THAT THE PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE WILL NOT ALLOW HIM TO COME TO ANY OF THE SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES THIS YEAR. I WOULD PROPOSE TO PUT THIS INFORMATION IN THE CONTEXT OF PARA 6(B) ABOVE. THERE WAS A STATE DEPT OFFICER DISCUSSION WITH A N.Y. TIMES OR WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT SEVERAL DAYS AGO WHICH HINTED THAT THE PRESIDENT MIGHT NOT BE COMING, AND I THINK IF THAT IS THE CASE, IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO GET THIS TO THE PM SOONER RATHER THAN LATER WHEN IT MAY GET CONFIDENTIAL

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TANGLED UP BY PRESS SPECULATION WITH WHAT IS HAPPENING HERE IN THE LEAST HELPKUL WAY. I NATURALLY WILL EMPHASIZE THAT THE PRESIDENT IS NOT COMING TO THIS AREA AS A WHOLE, AND THAT HE IS NOT SIMPLY BY-PASSING INDIA. MRS. GANDHI MAY, IN ANY EVENT, DRAW THE CONCLUSION THAT THERE IS A DIRECT CONNECTION WITH HER EMERGENCY ACTIONS. BUT I THINK THAT CAN BE SUBSTANTIVELY TEMPERED IF I CAN INDICATE THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL HOPE TO RESCHEDULE HIS VISIT FOR NEXT YEAR, AND DO THIS IN THE CONTEXT OF A RENEWAL OF THE SECRETARY'S ANTICIPATION OF MEETING WITH CHAVAN IN SEPTEMBER.

9. I REALIZE THIS LAST MAY BE TOO MUCH TO LOAD THE BOAT WITH AT THE PRESENT TIME BUT WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR THOUGHTS IN ANY EVENT. I AM SENDING A SEPARATE MESSAGE ON THE PLANS WE HAVE JUST LEARNED OF FOR A US NAVAL TASK FORCE TO COME INTO THE INDIAN OCEAN ONE WEEK FROM TODAY. IF THAT STAYS ON THE TRACK, AND I HOPE IT DOESN'T, I THINK IT WILL BE PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT TO SEE MRS. GANDHI PERSONALLY IN AN EFFORT TO DEFLECT WHAT MAY BE HER IMMEDIATE HIGHLY NEGATIVE REACTION. SAXBE UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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